

**REMARKS**

This is in response to the Official Action currently outstanding in the above-identified application, which Official Action the Examiner has designated as being FINAL

Claims 1-11 were present in this application at the time of the issuance of the currently outstanding FINAL Official Action. The present Amendment amends Claims 1 - 6, 9 and 10. Claim 11 is canceled, without prejudice. No claims are added or withdrawn. Accordingly, upon the entry of the foregoing Amendment, the claims under active prosecution in this application will be Claims 1-10.

The claims as they will stand upon the entry of the foregoing Amendment are set forth in full herein as required by the Rules.

In the currently outstanding Official Action, the Examiner has:

1. Acknowledged Applicants' claim of foreign priority under 35 USC 119(a)-(d), and confirmed the safe receipt of the priority document for this application by the United States Patent and Trademark Office;
2. Indicated that the drawings filed in this application on 19 June 2003 are accepted;
3. Provided Applicants with a Notice of References Cited (Form PTO-892);
4. Rejected Claims 1 and 6 under 35 USC 112 on the bases that there is insufficient antecedent basis in Claims 1 and 6 for the phrase "processing the image data" that respectively appears at line 7 and at line 10 thereof;
5. Rejected Claims 1-11 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chrisop et al. (US Patent Publication No. 2001/00252343) in view of Yamada et al. (US Patent No. 7,113,291);

With regard to items 1-3 above, further detailed discussion in these Remarks is not believed to be necessary.1-4

With respect to item 4 above, Applicants respectfully request entry of the above stated amendments particularly to Claims 1 and 6 (the other amendments stated hereinabove having been made simply for clarity of expression). Applicants respectfully submit that the foregoing Amendments make the claims of this application abundantly clear to the affect that the image data that is being discussed in the claims is the image data that is stored in the image data storage unit of the image processing device which is image data to be newly processed. As so amended, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims of this application are clear and definite, and consequently that the currently outstanding rejections of Claims 1 and 6 should be withdrawn in view of the foregoing Amendment. A decision so holding in response to this submission is respectfully requested.

With respect to item 5 above, it is noted that in the Response to Arguments section of the currently outstanding Official Action, the Examiner has disagreed with Applicants' argument that the "concealing" of data referred to by the Chrisop reference is different from the destruction of stored image data by the image data destruction unit as claimed in the present application. Applicants respectfully submit, however, that regardless of the Examiner's position on that issue, the fact remains that the "restriction unit" herein claimed is not disclosed, taught or suggested by any of the art relied upon by the Examiner, whether that art be taken alone or in combination.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's currently outstanding prior art rejection and respectfully request reconsideration. As mentioned, the basis for this traversal of the Examiner's position is that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the features of Claims 1 and 6 of the present invention as rephrased by the foregoing Amendment, that is, the art cited by the Examiner whether taken alone or in combination does not teach, disclose or suggest an operation restricting unit for restricting storage of image data to be newly processed and for restricting operations for processing the image data to be newly processed when a demand for the image processing device to destroy the image data stored in the image processing device is made and the image data destruction unit destroys the image data stored in the image data storage unit.

In other words, with reference to the Remarks that accompanied Applicants' previous Amendment of 12 June 2007, Applicants respectfully submit that even though the Examiner may disagree with Applicants' assertions in the second full paragraph of page 8 thereof, the fact remains that the arguments that immediately follow that paragraph appear to be determinative of the patentability of the present claims over the art relied upon by the Examiner but to have been overlooked by the Examiner in the course of his examination of this application leading up the issuance of the currently outstanding FINAL Official Action. The portion of Applicants' previous Remarks just referred to is reproduced below for the convenience of the Examiner in this regard.

In further support for this position, Applicants respectfully note that in the specification of the present application the function of the restricting unit is described at the final paragraph of page 24 as follows:

In this embodiment, what is meant by restricting the operation for processing the image data as an image processing device is to completely lock the operation for processing the image data so as to reassure the user discarding the image processing device that the image data is disposed (reassure data security). However, it is also possible to restrict only a portion of the functions of the device, such as prohibiting use of the mass-storage system or hard disc (in other words prohibiting access to the mass-storage system) disposed in the image processing device.

and at the final full paragraph of page 33 as follows:

Moreover, the operation of the restriction means comprises a function to restrict the operation for processing image data and to display the information related to the restriction on the display unit of the manipulation means, so the user can be informed that the operation for processing the image data is restricted. Therefore, the user of the device can confirm that the image processing operation is restricted and be reassured.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner has mischaracterized the disclosure of the Chisop reference as it relates to the present claims. Specifically, the fact that image data may be “concealed” does not mean that the operation of the processing device is necessarily restricted. In the present invention, however, the operation restricting unit restricts the operation for processing the image data such that the user can be assured when the image destruction unit has supposedly destroyed the data that none of the data that was supposed to have been destroyed will thereafter inadvertently be allowed to leak out personal or otherwise confidential data to an unauthorized user via the operation of the associated image processing function of the device. The foregoing Amendment emphasizes this point by the addition of language directed specifically to the restriction of storage of image data to be newly processed in addition to the restriction of the operation for processing the previously stored image data.

Therefore, in view of the foregoing Amendment and Remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that this application now is in condition for allowance and a decision so holding in response to this submission is respectfully requested.

Applicants also believe that additional fees beyond those submitted herewith are not required in connection with the consideration of this response to the currently outstanding Official Action. However, if for any reason a fee is required, a fee paid is inadequate or credit is owed for any excess fee paid, you are hereby authorized and requested to charge and/or credit Deposit Account No. **04-1105**, as necessary, for the correct payment of all fees which may be due in connection with the filing and consideration of this communication.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: December 26, 2007

  
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SIGNATURE OF PRACTITIONER

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